

I am writing to you to express my concerns in relation to any decisions that may lead to a cutback in the Medicare rebate for Clinical Psychology services. While I would argue that the training clinical psychologists are required to undertake so as to ensure expertise in the areas of clinical assessment, diagnosis and clinical treatment is an important consideration as it means there has been a specialization in clinical service of relevance to Medicare, I am particularly concerned that many of the parents of the children and young people I currently treat would not be able to access my services if the Medicare rebate was reduced. Further, many families of such children and adolescents would have difficulty finding an alternative service that could provide relevant treatment, given the pressures that community based services have been under for a considerable period of time. In this regard, I am already providing services at a considerable discount to the recommended Australian Psychological Society's recommended fee so as to enable such families to access my services.

As a Clinical Psychologist, working in the private sector, I work closely with General Practitioners, Paediatricians, Psychiatrists and allied professionals, such as Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists, and have done so for over 20 years. Based on my understanding of relevant literature, and my clinical experience, I believe it is very important for children to have access to quality assessment and treatment for their developmental, social, emotional and behavioural problems/conditions, as without timely, appropriate assistance there can be a significant deterioration in the presenting problems which may entail potentially more negative prognoses.

I would therefore hope that in the current debate in relation to Medicare rebates for psychological services there is a focus on the extensive specialist training (including ongoing specialist training) that will ensure that patients are able to access best practice service that is appropriate for their needs, and that patients are able to access reasonably affordable service for their or their children's psychological difficulties.

Yours sincerely,